

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application for the reasons noted hereinafter is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, 43-52, and 54-57 are pending in this application.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4, 7, 9-18, 21, 23-28, 43-46, 49, 51, 52, and 54-56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Moffatt (US Patent Publication No. 2003/0214664) in view of Jeoung (US Patent Publication No. 2001/0003097) and Hashimoto (US Patent No. 5,907,319); and Claims 5, 6, 19, 20, 47, 48, 50, and 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Moffatt in view of Jeoung and Ikegami (US Patent No. 6,745,334).

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-4, 7, 9-18, 21, 23-28, 43-46, 49, 51, 52, and 54-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Moffatt in view of Jeoung and Hashimoto, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection, and traverse the rejection as discussed next.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to an image forming apparatus including, *inter alia*:

...a plurality of application programs that are usable on the image forming apparatus and that include at least one of a copy application program, a printer application program, and a FAX application program, the image forming apparatus comprising:

a displaying part configured to display a screen used for selecting an application program on an operation display part of the image forming apparatus; and

an assigning part configured to assign a selected application program that is selected on the screen to a function key when the function key is pushed, such that the selected application program is executed when the function key is later pushed after assigning of the selected application program has occurred;

a control part configured to launch the application program assigned to the function key when the function key is pushed;

a determination part configured to determine whether the function key is assigned a plurality of application programs or a single application program;

if the determination part determines that a plurality of application programs are assigned to the function key and when the function key is pushed, the control part being configured to display a selection screen on the operation panel, for selecting an application program from among the plurality of application programs assigned to the function key, and launch an application program selected on the selection screen; and

if the determination part determines that a single application program is assigned to the function key, the control part being configured to launch the single application program without displaying the selection screen when the function key is pushed; and

a screen switching unit configured to switch a screen displayed on the operation display part to a screen of an application program that is selected on the selection screen or selected by pushing the function key.

Independent Claims 15 and 43, although varying in claim scope and/or statutory class, recite substantially similar features as independent Claim 1. Thus, the arguments presented below with respect to Claim 1 are also applicable to independent Claims 15 and 43.

Page 6 of the outstanding Office Action acknowledges that “Moffatt in view of Jeoung does not disclose a screen switching unit configured to switch a screen displayed on the operation display part to a screen of an application program that is selected on the selection screen or selected by pushing the function key.” In an attempt to cure the above-noted deficiencies of Moffatt and Jeoung, page 6 of the outstanding Office Action asserts that “Hashimoto discloses a screen switching unit (switching key 237 shown in Figure 6) configured to switch a screen display on the operation display part to the screen of an application program that is selected on the selection screen or selected by pushing the function key. (Col. 20, lines 35-43 - thus the operator switches by operating the switch key 237 to switch from one picture screen to another picture screen).” Applicants respectfully disagree.

Hashimoto describes a picture switch key 237 for switching between a simple picture and a standard picture. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the picture switch key 237 is distinct from Applicants' claimed screen switching unit as described below. In Hashimoto, the picture switch key 237 is a key dedicated for switching between the pictures. The picture switch key 237 in Hashimoto fails to teach or suggest "a screen switching unit configured to switch a screen displayed on the operation display part to a screen of an application program that is selected on the selection screen or selected by pushing the function key."

First, Applicants' screen switching unit is configured to switch a screen displayed on the operation display part to a screen of an ***application program*** that is ***selected*** on the ***selection screen***. Hashimoto clearly does not describe this feature, as the picture switch key 237 merely causing a switching between two different picture modes, but does not cause the screen to be switched to an application program that ***is selected on a selection screen***.

Second, Applicants' screen switching unit is configured to switch a screen displayed on the operation display part to a screen of an application program selected from a plurality of application programs, based on the determination of the determination part, by pushing the function key. In Hashimoto, one picture screen is switched to another picture screen by pushing the switch key 237.

In contrast, in Applicants' image forming apparatus, a determination part determines whether the function key is assigned a plurality of application programs or a single application program, and if the determination part determines that a single application program is assigned to the function key the control part launches the single application program without displaying the selection screen when the function key is pushed, and the screen switching unit switches the screen displayed on the operation display part to a screen of an application program selected from ***a plurality of application programs*** based on the

determination of the determination part by pushing the function key. Thus, in Hashimoto, when a user pushes the switch key 237, the screen is merely switched to the other *one* alternative screen mode. In other words, Hashimoto does not describe the step of a determination by a determination part prior to the screen switch.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 15, and 43 (and all claims depending thereon) patentably distinguish over Moffatt, Jeoung, and Hashimoto.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request rejection of Claims 1-4, 7, 9-18, 21, 23-28, 43-46, 49, 51, 52, and 54-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Moffatt in view of Jeoung and Hashimoto be withdrawn.

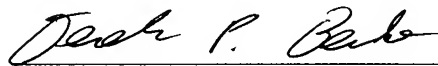
In response to the rejection of Claims 5, 6, 19, 20, 47, 48, 50, and 57 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Moffatt in view of Jeoung and Ikegami, Applicants note that the above-listed claims are dependent on independent Claims 1, 15, and 43, and are thus believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Further, Applicants note that Ikegami fails to cure any of the above-noted deficiencies of Moffatt and Jeoung.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request rejection of Claims 5, 6, 19, 20, 47, 48, 50, and 57 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the above comments, it is respectfully submitted that the outstanding ground for rejection has been overcome and that Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, 43-52, and 54-57 patentably define over the prior art. Claims 1-7, 9-21, 23-28, 43-52, and 54-57 are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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